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ABSTRACT

A rich description of the ways in which an effective principal utilizes symbolic leadership to develop shared school meanings and purposes is presented in this paper. Methodology involved the following: (1) individual and group interviews with 42 teachers, several other staff members, and the principal of an effective urban elementary school enrolling 800 students; (2) principal observation; (3) document analysis; and (4) teachers' logbook analysis. Findings indicate that this effective principal used empowerment through understanding and autonomy and a whole-language, hands-on process approach. In his first years at this school, the principal motivated improvement in language arts achievement; now there was an emerging mathematics and science emphasis. Most effective was the principals' use of symbolic language, resources, and time to enhance symbolic leadership. A limitation of the findings is that they constitute the researchers' constructed reality of the multiple realities existing within the school and the ethnographic description. An interview guide and taxonomy of symbolic leadership forms are included. (25 references) (LMI)

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Symbolic Leadership Exhibited by an Effective Principal in an Exemplary Elementary School

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Running head: SYMBOLIC LEADERSHIP

Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association conference, Boston, Massachusetts, April 16-20, 1990.

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Introduction

The importance of the leader to the success of an organization has become axiomatic. Yet leadership, while one of the most researched topics, has also been one of the least understood. In education, the body of research known as instructionally effective schools (IES) research continually found the principal to be key to the effectiveness of a school. However, IES research is no more enlightening than leadership research from other sectors in terms of how a principal goes about being an effective leader--it merely states that effective schools are characterized by principals that are strong leaders. The research does not provide an answer to what it means to be a strong leader. Does being a strong leader entail being autocratic and domineering? Does it mean spending most of one's time in classrooms observing and evaluating instruction? Does it mean making sure that the school is characterized by the other correlates of instructionally effective schools research?

Purkey and Smith (1983) have argued that IES research findings provide a simplistic, formulaic approach to effectiveness that more likely results from the total school culture. Recent scholars of effective organizations have echoed this sentiment and suggested that it is the shared meanings held by people who work in the organization that contribute to its effectiveness. Peters and Waterman (1982) have noted the presence of a central value in effective organizations while others (e.g. Deal & Kennedy, 1982) have argued that shared meanings determine "the way we do things around here" (p.4).

From the articulation of culture as an important ingredient in organizational effectiveness, the logical next step was to determine the role leaders played in the development of organizational culture and how they might manage the culture to serve organizational ends. Numerous scholars found that organizations with positive cultures have leaders with strong visions that influence the culture of the organization (see e.g. Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1987). These leaders transmit their visions and embed them in the culture of the organization in symbolic ways (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1984). Peters (1978), in discussing the symbolism-management connection, notes that "symbols are the very stuff of management. Executives, after all, do not synthesize chemicals or operate lift trucks; they deal in symbols...[the executive is] constantly acting out the vision and goals he is trying to realize in an

organization that is typically far too vast and complex for him to control directly" (p.10).

Organizational culture and the role leaders play in it have not been without criticism. Critics have argued that much of the culture literature embodies a manipulative view in which culture becomes a newly discovered, less obtrusive but, perhaps more pervasive way of control (Foster, 1986; Bates, 1987). Bates (1987) writes, "Deal and Kennedy and their colleagues are arguing for a shift from traditional forms of bureaucratic control, toward techniques of idealogical control based upon the manipulation of the company culture...such a shift toward idealogical control implies the intervention of managers in the very consciousness of workers" (p.83). Bates refers to those who exercise control in this manner as "symbolic managers" and implies that they are part of an instrumentalist model that is concerned with manipulation and control. Foster (1986) asserts that such managers manipulate culture because they "engage in a program of change designed to produce a new culture...altered to reflect the particular reality the manager happens to envision" (p.136).

Every organization, however, has a culture and every organizational member influences that culture. Human rights dictate that organizational members, including the leader, are permitted to act in a manner consistent with critically examined choices they have made. By virtue of position, choices made by the designated leader, are likely to exert a greater influence upon the culture than those made by other organizational members. Bates and Foster acknowledge the unavoidability of leadership influence. Foster (1986) writes, "Leaders can change a culture, but not by following particular programs of intervention. Instead they change a culture through their own enactments of of the aspects of culture they value. Thus culture is...an intuitive expression of one's own beliefs" (p.136)." Bates (1987) notes that he isn't suggesting that leaders withdraw from the decision-making process but rather that they practice "informed advocacy" which, "is inevitably suffused with values and idealogy" (p.111). The values both Bates (1987 and Foster (1986) suggest are rooted in empowerment achieved through self-awareness and understanding, resulting in autonomous actions based on the individual's rational thinking. Foster (1986) argues that the leader's influence on culture should involve "empowering individuals in order to evaluate what goals are important and what conditions are helpful...The leader here is truly concerned with the development of followers, with the realization of

followers' potential to become leaders themselves" (p.185-186).

What then distinguishes the manager who manipulates culture from the leader who influences to promote understanding, autonomy and thus, empowerment? The symbolic manager manipulates the culture in the pursuit of a purely personal agenda with little or no concern for the values of other organizational members. The symbolic leader enables others to critically analyze their lives and thus create organizations that fulfill the needs of all who inhabit them.

Discussions of both symbolic leadership and symbolic management have generally been accompanied by a few, carefully selected, illustrative examples. In most cases, however, the examples have been selected from a variety of organizations in which the authors have conducted research. Missing are thick descriptions that illustrate how a leader of an organization utilizes the various aspects of symbolic leadership described above. Anderson (1990b.) recently noted this shortcoming, arguing that researchers must "study the invisible and unobtrusive forms of control that are exercised in schools" (p.39) and that "accounts are urgently needed that describe how administrators attempt to manage the meaning of their organizations" (p.51).

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to (a.) provide a rich description of how an effective principal used various aspects of symbolic leadership to influence the development and discovery of shared meanings and purposes in a school, (b.) examine various forms (activities, actions, language, artifacts) that symbolic leadership takes and, (c.) discover examples that help distinguish between manipulating culture to achieve personal agendas and, influencing a culture in ways that empowers organizational members.

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

Sergiovanni (1984, 1987) argues that leaders have five forces at their disposal. These consist of the technical, human, educational, symbolic and cultural force. He defines a force as "the strength or energy brought to bear on a situation to start or stop motion or change" (p.6). Technical leadership is described as

planning, organizing, coordinating and scheduling. Human leadership as providing support, encouraging growth, building morale and using participatory management. Educational leadership consists of bringing expert professional knowledge to such areas as supervision, program development and teaching effectiveness. Symbolic leadership involves providing selective attention and modeling to others what is important and valued in the school. Finally, cultural leadership is defining, strengthening, and articulating the values, beliefs and cultural strands that give the school its unique identity (Sergiovanni, 1984, 1987). Sergiovanni (1984) argues that these forces form a hierarchy and in order for a school to be competent its principal must effectively use technical, human and educational forces; to be excellent the principal must additionally utilize symbolic and cultural forces.

As one examines the hierarchy several difficulties become apparent.

1. All schools and organizations have a culture. Some are positive, some negative, some have elements of each. Some are strong and well-defined, others defined by their ill-definedness. All members of an organization play a part in shaping the organization's culture and thus, all principals, being organizational members, utilize the cultural leadership force.

2. The distinction between symbolic and cultural leadership seems nonexistent and is blurry, at best. Schein (1986) has noted that the primary mechanisms leaders use to transmit and embed culture include (a.) what they pay attention to, (b.) their role modeling, teaching and coaching, (c.) their reactions to critical incidents and, (d.) the criteria they use for selection, rewards, status and, termination. The reason each of these mechanisms embeds culture is because it "provides selective attention" to what is important and valued in the school. As principals provide selective attention (symbolic leadership) they simultaneously define, strengthen and articulate the cultural strands that give the school its identity (cultural leadership). Thus, the distinction between symbolic and cultural leadership disappears.

3. Principals provide selective attention and model what is important to the school (symbolic leadership) using the technical force (e.g. in the way they set up schedules), the human force (e.g. how they treat staff members) and the educational force (e.g. how much time they spend dealing with instructional matters). Consequently, all principals use symbolic leadership.

Based on the above discussion, several propositions emerged which provided the theoretical framework for this study.

1. All principals use symbolic leadership. The actions they take (commitment of time, energy and resources), the language they use (oral and written) and, the artifacts they create (semi-permanent or permanent aspects of the school) send messages to followers that symbolize what is important to the leader.

2. Symbolic leadership takes place in the context of technical, human and educational activities and interactions.

3. Consistent messages symbolize and define which human and educational values are important in the school. These values help followers attach meaning to what they do and thus influence the way of life and the way in which tasks are accomplished.

Much of the discussion of symbolic leadership has focused on the use of slogans, stories, rituals and, ceremonies (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Dandridge, Mitroff & Joyce, 1980, Peters & Waterman, 1982). While these may provide examples of symbolic leadership use, they encompass only a narrow portion of the total range of symbolic leadership. Dwyer, Barnett and Lee (1987) found that effective principals had an "overarching framework" which guided the frequent and often brief interactions that made up their day and communicated their values to teachers. Anderson (1990b.) has argued that, "definitions of organizational reality are reinforced or contested through the hundreds of daily exchanges that take place among organizational members" (p.49), and Sergiovanni (in press) has noted that symbolic leadership does not require grand dramatic events but more often takes place through simple routines that communicate important messages.

Scholars have variously categorized the daily interactions, exchanges and routines that make up the daily lives of leaders and influence organizational members into strategies (Peters, 1978), linkages (Firestone & Wilson, 1987) and, forces (Sergiovanni, 1984, 1987). Additionally Trice and Beyer (1984) have explored the role of language and gestures while Schein (1986) has described the "embedding mechanisms" that leaders use to develop and transmit culture (p.224). Prior to data collection the researchers developed a taxonomy to sensitize them to activities, actions, language and artifacts that might send messages to followers (see Table 1). Sergiovanni's (1984, 1987) leadership forces were used as the organizing framework.

Additionally, the works of Dandridge, Mitroff and Joyce (1980), Deal and Kennedy (1982), Firestone and Wilson (1987), Peters (1978), Schein (1986), Trice and Beyer (1984) and, the researchers' own thinking about symbolic leadership were used to develop the items in the taxonomy (see Table 1).

insert Table 1 about here

Data Sources

Data was gathered in an elementary school of 800 students in a large, urban school district of 100,000 students. While the district was urban, the school was located in one of its few rural areas. The school was populated by 72% White, 25% Black and 3% Hispanic students with 45% of the students qualifying for either free or reduced lunch.

The school was perceived to be exemplary and its principal considered outstanding by teachers, school district personnel and the surrounding community. It was selected for this study by asking various district level school employees to list the outstanding elementary school and principals. Lists were then checked for common entries. The school/principal selected for this study were the only combination which appeared on every list. Throughout the interviews teachers provided examples that verified the high regard parents and other school district personnel had for the school. Several teachers noted that when they attended professional meetings, teachers form other schools frequently approached them and said, "Oh, you're from Carver. I hear it's a wonderful place! How do you get in out there?" The school has also won numerous local, state and national awards.

Data Collection

There are several views on how people attach meanings to symbols. The first view holds that meaning is present in the object itself. Thus, a chair is clearly a chair, a school a school and so on. The second view of symbolism holds that psychological elements within the person to whom an object or action has meaning brings meaning to the object or action while the third view, symbolic interactionism, holds that meaning arises out of the interaction between people with regard to an object or action (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism prevents data collection strictly through observation since the interpretation of the message's meaning is not present in the message itself, but rather springs from the interaction of the receiver with the message. In order to circumvent this obstacle, interviews were used as the primary means of data collection. Interviews allowed the researchers to determine from organizational members what themes were present in the school and then to solicit from them examples that they felt had embedded and reinforced these themes. Basically, interview questions were developed that asked, "What's important in this school? How did you find out that this was important?"

Interviews were conducted with all teachers (42). Other certified staff members including the principal, assistant principal, curriculum resource teacher, guidance counselor and, media specialist were also interviewed. The principal was formally interviewed separately by each researcher and was also engaged in numerous informal conversations. An interview guide was developed to outline questions (see Appendix A), but frequent probes based on responses took place during the interviews.

Thirty teachers were interviewed individually, while the other twelve were interviewed in two focus groups of six members each. The purpose of the focus groups was to attempt to obtain data different than that obtained in the individual interviews. A third focus group interview was conducted subsequent to initial data analysis. The purpose of the third focus group was to verify initial data analysis as well as to solicit any data that initial data collection may have overlooked. The individual and group interviews were split evenly between the two researchers with both researchers being present for the final focus group. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed.

Three secondary means of data collection were used for triangulation to both corroborate and elaborate on interview data (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Observation of the principal took place during times when the researchers were not interviewing staff members with several additional visits made simply for principal observation. Observation field notes were recorded on paper or on audio tape depending on which format was least obtrusive at the time. Documents including, but not limited to, handbooks, teacher bulletins, parent newsletters, grant proposals and, school evaluations were content analyzed. Logs were kept by ten teachers in which they recorded any contact they had with the

principal during a ten day period. Contacts included, but were not limited to, conversations, PA anouncements, classroom visits, notes and, individual or group interaction at meetings. Log-keeping teachers were selected randomly from within their grade level group with one to two selected from each grade level.

Data Analysis

Copies of interview transcripts, taped and written field notes, teacher-kept logs and school documents were independently analyzed by each researcher. Subsequent to initial analysis, the researchers shared and conjoined their findings. Data sources were also triangulated.

Data were analyzed for the frequency with which particular items were mentioned as well as for patterns of thought or behavior and key events items that suggested particular themes (Fetterman, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1984). Data were reanalyzed subsequent to theme development to identify all examples that supported each theme. Space limitations of this paper prevented the researchers from including all supporting examples.

In writing the findings section the researchers faced a dilemma commonly faced by ethnographers, that is, "the reordering of one's data...into a linear arrangement. Somehow or other one has to arrange the text into a sequence...the everyday life under investigation is not itself organized in such neat linear array" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1989; p. 212). Simply listing themes accompanied by supporting examples would fail to provide the richness of description that was desired. Providing the richness of description desired was not possible using the data in its original format. However, since a primary objective of the study was to provide a rich description, the researchers opted to present the findings as a mini-ethnography. The mini-ethnography was developed in the context of a chronological shell. While the shell presents the viewpoint of a fictitious teacher, the description reflects stories, events, conversations, thoughts, feelings and, recollections compiled from interview transcripts, logs, documents and field notes.

Findings

Mrs. Watson drove slowly down the country road. It was good to finally be out of the noise and exhaust of city traffic. The forty-five minute drive from her home to the school would try most people's nerves and it did hers some mornings but she had decided long ago that it was worth it. When Steve Sage had asked her to interview for a teaching position at Carver she had felt an immediate sense of excitement. She had heard that he was an outstanding principal. Additionally, the opportunity to work in a brand new school in a peaceful rural setting was also appealing. She felt very lucky to be able to work here. She could no longer imagine working for anybody else or at any other school. The place was special and everyone knew it. Whenever she went to professional meetings and talked to other teachers they always said, "You're from Carver? I've heard about your school. You're so lucky. How did you get in out there?" She agreed with them--she was lucky.

She thought back to how she ended up at Carver. The interview had been different than any she had previously experienced. She had been somewhat taken aback by its depth. And then there were all those people in the room--the principal, guidance counselor, curriculum resource teacher and the other teacher that had already been hired for her grade level. The questions too had been very different. Word associations. Education things. Names of people and theories. Questions like, "What was the last lesson you taught that really bombed? What was the name of the last children's book you read?" Experiences and things that were easy to talk about, that made it seem more like a conversation than an interview, but which tell you a lot about a person. She remembered thinking after the interview, "Wow, that was a pretty smart thing to ask!". Still, she had been exhausted after the interview! Mr. Sage had once confided to her that he had looked for people who were knowledgeable, opinionated and above all, committed. Additionally, he looked for people who made him laugh in the interview since that indicated to him that he was comfortable with those people. He had said he really wasn't looking for superstars. Just people who worked hard. Apparently the interviews had paid dividends. The staff was extremely hard working. If you wanted to meet a bunch of Carver teachers you could come at 4 PM. Or 5 PM. Or on weekends. From that initial group of charter members all but a handful were still at the school. The teachers who were

no longer with them had left only because their spouses had been transferred out of town.

As her car approached the final turn into the school she looked ahead at the horseman's park which lay just beyond the school. She rounded the final corner and the school spread out before her. The white buildings with bright blue trim gave a clean, cheerful appearance. She noticed that the flowers around the school buildings were already blooming even though it was only February. She could still clearly visualize the image of Mr. Sage, in his blue jeans and on his knees, planting and cultivating the flowers, plants and bushes that ringed the buildings. It had happened last Spring. Mr. Sage had had an intern principal working with him for a year and a half and felt it was important that the intern spend some time as the acting principal. So he had looked for a project that would get him out of the office and the mainstream of school operations. He had decided that the school would be much more attractive with additional landscaping. Unfortunately money was neither available for landscaping materials nor for labor. Never one to be stifled by minor obstacles, Mr. Sage had appealed to the parents and students for donations of plants and flowers (272 of them). He also announced a planting day for which he requested them to volunteer their time. For several weeks after the planting day he had spent his time finishing the landscaping that had not been completed that day. Students would stop to talk to him as he planted and he'd take a few minutes out to chat with them. Meanwhile the intern principal had free reign over the office and mainstream school operations.

She parked her car and walked toward the administration building. Next to it, separated by a wide grassy area lay the cafeteria. Catty-corner from the administration building and lying in the center of the school complex was the building that housed the Media center. Next to the Media Center lay the art and and music complex. Forming a third row of buildings and bordering the horseman's park were the classroom buildings. Each grade level was housed in a different building separated by a wide sidewalk. Scattered throughout the campus were several large, open courtyards, crisscrossed by sidewalks but with sufficient grassy areas to be aesthetically pleasing. In the courtyard by the cafeteria area were a number of picnic tables which allowed classes to take advantage of the mild southeastern climate by eating outside.

The school looked so much nicer and cleaner than most of the other schools in this area. It was four years old but yet it was in great shape. She knew that with 800 students, aged 4-12, and almost another 100 adults using the facility every day, neatness and cleanliness wasn't a given. The little tricks, like the "one foot rule" that Mr. Sage had come up with helped instill a sense of responsibility in a positive way. All one had to say when a student was leaning against a wall or had their hands on it was, "Oh, don't forget the one-foot rule" and the student would quickly move one foot from the wall. She remembered the time Mr. Sage had come through her classroom on one of his frequent walk-throughs and noticed a student leaning back on the gliders of his chair. "Do you know what those gliders cost?" he had asked. "Now, I want you to figure out how much per chair that is. See if you can figure it out...Now, why is it important not to lean back on one's chair?" Somehow he had a way of presenting everything, even discipline, in a way that helped the children to think and learn.

As she entered the administration building she was struck again by how it reflected the remainder of the school. The secretary and her aides were all busy but yet there was an aura of calmness in the large, open room. The many skylights that ringed the ceiling helped brighten the room but it was the decorations that gave it character. In both entrances lay large yellow and blue rubber floor mats depicting the school's logo--the rearing Carver stallion with the rays of the sun in the background and the slogan, "Where the kids shine". A nearby bulletin board contained the words to the children's book, <u>If You Give a Mouse a Cookie</u>. The words were illustrated with snapshots of students acting out the scenes from the book. Groupings of easy chairs were scattered throughout the room. Next to each grouping of chairs, an endtable contained a colorful plastic basket in which children's books were neatly arranged. From the ceiling hung the Black History posters which each classroom had worked on during the past weeks.

The sight of the posters caused her to recall the conversation she had overheard the other day. Upon completion of the posters, students were required to bring them to Mr. Sage for his approval. She had been in the office during a time when several 4th graders were presenting their poster. Mr. Sage had been a stern taskmaster asking the students numerous questions about the people pictured on the poster.

"Is Tony Dorsett still playing?"

"I don't know but Pete Rose started in 1969 and he's still playing."

"Do you think baseball players last as long as football players?"

The discussion had continued and moved on to another figure on the poster, that of Nel Carter, an actor.

"What did Nel Carter do for Mr. Sage?".

"Entertained you."

Mr. Sage had then asked, "What, where, when?"

The student replied, Gimme a Break.

No, I won't give you a break!"

To which the student replied, "No, that's the name of the show!"

She smiled to herself as she approached the secretary's counter. The secretary was just answering the phone and she heard the familar greeting, "Carver Elementary, where the kids shine. May I help you?" After the secretary finished her brief telephone conversation, Mrs. Watson asked her to remind Mr. Sage about the meeting she had with him for that afternoon to discuss a grant that they were writing.

She made a quick stop by the faculty lounge to put her lunch in the refrigerator. As usual, the lounge was empty. It just seemed that everyone worked so hard that they didn't have time for morning coffee in the lounge. The place was always empty, yet it wasn't because they didn't enjoy each other's company. They just had too much to do.

On her way out of the lounge she stopped by her mailbox where she found three items, two expected and one unexpected. The first item was a "Curriculum Update" which featured a written debate between various experts on the phonics versus whole language approach. On the article Mr. Sage had scrawled, "You might find this interesting".

The surprise was a box of file folders which had been placed in each teacher's mailbox. Across the top of the box was written, "Happy Valentines Day!" How opportune, she thought, since she had just run out of file folders yesterday. Mr. Sage knew that many of them used the folders for writing. In a subtle way he was telling them that this was important to him. Last year for Valentine's he had given each of them a basket of children's books. She was amazed at how he was always able to obtain all the materials and supplies they needed. He was constantly asking them what they wanted. He also kept a wish list and she couldn't recall ever asking for anything that didn't show up. Sometimes it

might take a few months, but it always showed up eventually. She had asked him once how he managed to acquire all these resources. He had replied, "I'm always broke. I never leave any money at the end of the year." While she knew this was true, as the recent ditto paper example had illustrated, she also knew that it went beyond this. Mr. Sage was constantly working with the teachers and the curriculum resource teacher on writing grants. Interestingly enough, when the grants weren't funded the materials and supplies requested in the grant still showed up somehow. She had once gone to Mr. Sage with an idea for a grant and he had asked her, "If the grant isn't funded, how will you get the money to do this?" It was as if grants served to get people dreaming about what they could do if they had some money but that the thinking then shifted to, "if we've decided that this is a good thing to do, then we need to figure out a way of doing it!". Mr. Sage had also set up a number of school-business partnerships. In addition to these formal partnerships she knew that many other area merchants were also solicited for donations to the school.

The third item in her mailbox was the weekly bulletin. At the top of the bulletin was written "DRAFT". Mr. Sage claimed he always wrote this at the top of all bulletins since that would excuse any spelling mistakes that he might have made. She wasn't sure though whether it might not also have something to do with the drafts teachers always asked students to submit before turning in polished products in the process writing approach that many of them used.

The bulletin contained five blocks on the left, one for each day of the week. Each block was about two inches wide and contained the special events for that day. Since the bulletin was always in their mailbox on Fridays, the blocks contained the events for the following week. The left three-fourths of the page contained the week's announcements. Separating the calendar from the announcements were sketches of two long nails. The bottom of the bulletin contained the statement, "It's what you add that makes the difference." She scanned down to the first announcement and quickly read it over.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

> Our school nail is growing and growing. The recent state-wide recognition of our exemplary reading program will make a difference throughout the state.

> Our implementation and commitment to AIMS is making a difference in our children's math and science background. Five star lessons improve the quality of our instruction. As you can see our nail is growing and growing.

She thought back to the beginning of the year when Mr. Sage had read the folk tale Nail Soup to the faculty at their opening meeting for the year. The story, about a group of villagers who make soup in several different ways only to find that it is adding the nail to the soup that makes the difference in the flavoring, had become a theme for the year. Mr. Sage had said to them at the conclusion of the story, "So you see, it is what you add that makes the difference. What will you add to your nail this year to help it grow?" Once school started he had read the book to every class in the school and issued a similar challenge to students--"What will you add to your nail this year?" He had given each class a nail to display in their room to remind them to look for ways to add to their nail.

There had been a book at the beginning of every year. In fact, the school had been opened four years ago with the book, The Little Engine that Could, the story of a train that was able to accomplish the impossible through hard work and the power of positive thinking. She read on.

P.D. PEARSON

> Interesting session. Pearson's concerns on whole language are very valid and should be recognized by all. I will get them printed.

This item was in reference to the workshop many of them had attended last week. The workshop had been held during the school day but Mr. Sage had created the opportunity for anyone who wanted to, to attend. Somehow he had been able to cover all the classrooms by using aides, special area teachers, the curriculum resource teacher--even he himself had taken a class. The result had been that Carver had been represented by a greater number of teachers than any other school. She knew that Mr. Sage had wanted to attend the workshop himself. But, he had confided to her, he realized that it would not be the same if he came back and told the teachers what the speaker had said as if they went and heard it firsthand. This wasn't the first time that he had provided such

opportunities for his staff. She appreciated these oportunities. It made her feel important, respected, informed and, professional. She read on.

REPORT CARDS

I have reviewed about 75% of the report cards. I was very pleased to see grades improve not only in academics but also in social skills and work habits. I hope the higher grades truly reflect improvement in these areas.

CURRICULUM MAPS

Team leaders will receive the maps for Science and Social Studies. We need to indicate the report periods we plan to teach the topics listed. Remember Social Studies lessons should evolve around the essential elements of Social Studies.

ISN'T GROWTH EXCITING?!

We have gained another EMH unit. We are growing in most grade levels. I have a feeling more portables will be arriving before long.

BUDGET CRUNCH

We have $328.61 to take us through the rest of the year. I will be depositing money from the fall fund raiser to cover the cost of ditto paper. Ditto paper will arrive. Let's hope we sell a ton of pictures this week. Ditto paper will arrive. All pictures were so beautiful. Yes, they were beautiful. Ditto paper will arrive.

GENTLE REMINDER: SCHEDULES, SCHEDULES, SCHEDULES

Boy, oh boy, we have schedules. We have an arrival schedule for staff and students. We have a lunch schedule for staff and students. We have a special area schedule for students. We have pull out schedules for staff and students. We have EPT schedules. We have SAT schedules. We have observation schedules. We have subject area schedules. We have scheduled restroom breaks for students. All schedules have beginning and ending times. All schedules have a point in time when we get frustrated when they are not followed. That point in time is usually when someone is at least four minutes early or four minutes late.

Schedules involve time. Anytime we are using someone's time, we need to make sure we are using the time correctly. Schedules are important to me because a school runs smoothly when we stick to the scheduled time. Everything revolves around time even when we do not have enough of it. THANK YOU FOR UNDERSTANDING.

CARVER TEACHERS SHINE

Why do Carver teachers shine? They shine because they say nice words to students. They shine because they care. They shine because they arrive to work on time. They shine because they go above and beyond with their time for children after hours. They shine because they teach the principal a thing or two or three or four. Carver teachers do shine! Thanks for making our school a nice place to be each day. Thanks for making my job easy. I am one lucky principal. Thank you.

A BUSY, BUSY WEEK

Last week was a busy week for me as it was for you. I appreciate how smoothly activities go when it is so busy. The smoothness is the result of everyone doing what needs to be done. Thanks. YOU HAVE DONE SO MUCH--YOU MAY LEAVE AT THE END OF THE STUDENT DAY TODAY.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"What we expect, believe and picture, we usually get." (Ruth Ross)

She left the office and walked to her classroom to get her materials ready for the student's arrival. Language class was first on today's agenda. She was so pleased with how well her language classes were going this year. The changes she had made this year had really been worthwhile. She and her grade level colleagues had gone to see Steve last year to get his permission to do a more literature-based reading program. They knew he was supportive of a literature approach and they didn't anticipate any problems getting his endorsement. However, after they had explained to him what they wanted to do, he asked them why they wanted to use this approach. They

explained that Miss Lincoln, the district language resource teacher, had told them that research supported the literature approach. To their amazement he had denied them permission to develop the literature-based approach. When they asked him why, he told them, "Miss Lincoln doesn't teach here--you do." They had gone back to their classrooms to regroup. Later they returned to tell him what the research said and their personal rationale for wanting to use a literature-based program. He then told them that he had initially denied them permission to use the literature-based approach because they had not convinced him that they knew what they were doing. "Now you've convinced me that you know what you're doing. If I didn't think you were able to handle a literature-based approach, I wouldn't let you use it."

She recalled a similar story that another group of teachers had told her. They had gone to see Mr. Sage as a grade level group because they were divided on whether to use a phonetic or a whole language approach to reading. They were uncertain as to whether they were pleasing him and doing what he felt was appropriate. He told them he wasn't so much concerned about which approach they were using, but rather was concerned with whether the kids were learning and whether they left the classroom at the end of the year excited about what they were doing and loving to read. He had told them, "You need to do your own thinking. Each of you needs to be able to explain and justify what you're doing. You don't all need to be doing the same thing."

He really gave them a lot of freedom in determining how they wanted to teach as long as they could explain why they wanted to use a particular method. He often told them, "We'll give you the curriculum, you decide how to teach it." In some schools the principals said, "You are not important. It's the children that count." Obviously, if as a teacher you didn't feel important you wouldn't teach well and, the kids would sense this immediately. They'd think, "The teachers aren't very important. Why should we listen to them?" At Carver, the children were obviously important but the teachers also got the message that they were important.

He was so receptive to their ideas too. The new EMH teacher had just told her a story yesterday. She had wanted to take her students on a field trip to a nearby mall to simulate the experience of shopping. Many of her students were from poor homes and had never had the opportunity to visit a mall and make choices about what to purchase or to pay for anything and calculate how much

change they should receive. The teacher's idea had been that they would simulate the experience without the use of real money. She had asked Mr. Sage's permission for the field trip. Being a new teacher at the school, the intensity and nature of his response had taken her by surprise. He had gotten all excited and told her he would give her five dollars for each child and then had gushed forth with half a dozen ideas of additional things she could build into the experience. The EMH teacher had told her, "Never in a million years would I have expected that! Never. In all the other schools I've been in, no one has ever been that concerned about what was important to the kids."

She had just finished getting her language materials ready when Mrs. Jones, her grade level partner walked into her room. "Hey, did you see the script for the parent spaghetti supper skit?" she asked, waving a piece of paper in one hand.

"No, I haven't," Mrs. Watson admitted as she reached for the paper and began reading.

Parent Spaghetti Supper Script:
I Heard it Through the Grapevine (revised)

The ins and outs of parenthood
don't always go the way they could.
Your little baby bundle of joy
grew to be content to crush and destroy.

Ya think your parents really had it good
because you always did just what you should.

CHORUS: Whoa I heard it through the grapevine
that your kids are going to be fine.
Whoa I heard it through the grapevine
these ideas can really ease your mind--
Momma, Dadda, Whoa!

So you say your kids are always late
last minute needs can aggravate.
Set your things aside the night before
specific place, perhaps beside the door.

Ya got to do it - make it a routine
then the morning runs like a new machine.

-CHORUS-

Everyday your life is filled with facts
that will help your kids add and subtract.
Your money only goes so far
so you figure cost while at the store.

You look for value - and then you divide
the package price and all the stuff inside.

-CHORUS-

Your kid's been bad and that ain't good.
You say he's terrorized the neighborhood.
Well he needs your love and guidance too,
you got to take some time to make some rules.

You be consistent and above all fair.
When rules are broken - follow through with
care.

-CHORUS-

Ya know reading isn't just for school.
It's a fun and most essential tool.
Why not take some time to hear a book.
Your kid can read - while - you cook.

And as you're driving - anyplace will do,
let your children read the signs to you.

FINAL CHORUS:
Whoa now you've heard it through the grapevine
your kids are gonna be fine.
Whoa now you've heard it through the grapevine
and we know you're gonna do fine--
Momma, Dadda, Go!

"That's great!" she exclaimed after reading it. "It should be fun. I think the parents and kids will enjoy it--and maybe learn something too."

"Hey, Easter's not too far off--do you think Steve will cook anything for us?" asked Mrs. Jones as she headed for the door.

Mrs. Watson thought back to some of his previous efforts. For Thanksgiving Mr. Sage had cooked a turkey. He had videotaped the entire preparation and cooking process and encouraged teachers to watch the tape with their students. He had really gotten involved with it. He weighed it. Then he showed the kids how to clean it. Then

he had explained how to stuff it while stuffing it. Finally, he had cooked it. All the while he had asked the kids questions. "How much do you think it weighs?. Estimate it. Do you think it will weigh the same after it's cooked as it did before it was cooked?" He had inserted the temperature thermometer. "What do you think the temperature is? Do you think it's done yet?" In between questions he had explained what each part of the turkey was and what function it served. After the turkey was done cooking he had served it to the teachers for lunch.

Before Christmas vacation, he had brought the students straight from the busses to the cafeteria where he had served all 800 of them hot chocolate before school started. He hadn't even told the teachers he was doing this and they couldn't figure out where their students were. The students had been so appreciative. It was as if someone had given them a million dollars. Most of them were from poor homes and probably didn't get hot chocolate very often.

"I don't know," she finally replied to Mrs. Jones's question. "Maybe he'll make a ham or bake hot cross buns." Mrs. Smith chuckled and proceeded to her room.

Mrs. Watson looked at the clock and realized that her students would be arriving any minute. She hurried to the door to greet them.

As soon as her students were settled she turned on the classroom TV. On Friday mornings, announcements were broadcast live from the media center by the WCKS (Where Carver Kids Shine) student "news team". A minute later, the announcements began. The student portion of the newscast included items of local and national news and a brief weather report (map and all). After about six or seven minutes Mr. Sage was introduced and he began his announcements. "Good morning, boys and girls, the correct time is 8:08 AM. Remember today is birthday cake day in the cafeteria. If your birthday is this month be sure to get your piece of birthday cake. Shining student awards were earned yesterday by Michael Smith, Todd Jones, Alicia Harvey, Melissa Pruitt and Stephanie Wilson from Mrs. Jones's room for following directions. Also shining student awards to Tom, Tim, Susie and Rachel from Mr. Robb's room for picking up paper in the courtyard. Thanks, kids! Mrs. Barwick's class earned a shining class award from Mrs. Sonny for putting their art supplies back quickly and neatly. Way to go, guys! Mrs. Small's class met their reading goals in the Pizza Hut Book-It program and will soon be getting a pizza party in

their rooms. Great work! Teachers, don't forget the whole language meeting being held in the district administrative offices this afternoon at 4 PM. Our 3rd graders will be leaving in a few minutes for a field trip to Cape Canaveral. Last year I received a phone call the day after our field trip from one of the people at Cape Canaveral who told me how great everyone was while they were there. I hope I get a phone call like that again tomorrow. Boys and girls, this morning when you got off the busses it was raining. Many of you got off the bus a little excited. Now, I don't know whether it was the rain that made you excited or that you were excited about getting into your classrooms and working with your favorite teachers and the rain had nothing to do with your loudness, running and excitement. I like the fact that you were excited about being in school but don't forget that our goal for this week is to make good choices in our behavior and our work. Today, I expect all of you to do your best, cooperate nicely and say nice things. I'll be walking around the school today looking for these types of good behavior. Thank you! Now let's all stand for the pledge to the flag and our school and patriotic song."

Upon completion of the televised announcements Mrs. Watson began her language class. She was in the middle of a discussion of the book, Amelia Bedelia, when the rear classroom door opened and Mr. Sage walked in. He overheard her last question and asked, "Who's thinking like Amelia Bedelia?" She gestured to the group of kids who were ringed most closely around her. Meanwhile the students had realized that Mr. Sage was in the room and vied for his attention, "Mr. Sage, Mr. Sage...!" "Let's listen", he told them as he tried to calm them down. He stayed for a few more minutes, actively participating in the discussion with the kids and then left by the front door.

When she first started working at Carver she had been amazed at how frequently Mr. Sage was in the classrooms. He seldom stayed for more than 5 minutes but somedays visited two or three times. She continued to be amazed at how he was able to instantly get involved with the lesson being taught and at how well he was able to relate to the kids. They loved him! Yet they knew he was the boss.

As he was leaving her room, Mr. Sage had stopped to let her know that he was ready for those marigolds anytime now. One of her friends owned a nursery close to the school and had agreed to donate some plants and

flowers to the school. Apparently, part two of Mr. Sage's "growth plan" was about to begin. She assured Mr. Sage she would talk to her friend soon.

Mr. Sage left Mrs. Watson's room and headed to the next classroom. He did a "walk-through" like this at least two to three times per week. He was going to be out of the building all day tomorrow so he knew he had to get a walk through in today. That reminded him, he needed to remember to record tomorrow's announcements before he left today so they could be played over the PA tomorrow morning. He didn't know if it fooled the older kids, but it sure made the younger kids think he was in the building.

With over 40 teachers on the staff, the walk-throughs took up a lot of time but he felt they were essential to helping him stay in touch with the kids and with what was going on in the instructional program. As he walked into the next classroom, a younger grade, the kids all started calling his name. He looked at a letter written on a piece of cardboard that was hanging from the ceiling, put a finger in front of his mouth and said, "Q is for quiet". The students were working on various activities in small groups so he walked to one group and asked them what they were doing. He stayed for a few minutes and walked to the next room in which the teacher was leading a game of hangman. He participated in the game and after a few minutes excitedly called, "Oh, I know the answer now!" and then more calmly, "But I'll write it on a piece of paper", which he did, leaving the paper on the teacher's desk as he left the room. Entering the next room, he once again caused a disruption with the kids calling to him. "Oh, I didn't mean to cause this disruption." The students were in the process of setting up a classroom restaurant with menus, money, charge cards and all the trappings. He assured them that he would be back for the grand opening on Monday. As he walked down the sidewalk to the next classroom, he passed a group of kindergartners several of whom called out to him, "Mr.Sage. Mr. Sage, I love you." "I love you too", he replied and stooped over as they reached to give him a hug. He asked them what they were working on in class and what they were learning. He entered the next classroom which had a substitute teacher that day. "How are you doing, Miss Henderson?" As he passed a student he remarked, " How are you? I saw your mother at PTA last night." Then to the class, "Are you working on a play?" After listening for a minute he excitedly exclaimed, "I

like that, I'm going to listen." Before leaving he told them, "Oh, Mrs. Martin will like that!" and headed for the door.

On the way to the next room he noticed a student running down the sidewalk and called to her, "Latitia, thank you for walking!" The girl immediately slowed to a walk. Entering the next room he noticed that all the students were actively engaged in learning, with the teacher and a small group of students working in one corner. The active involvement of teacher and students was one of the things he always looked for on his walk-throughs. He also looked for the direction, guidance and supervision that was being provided for the students as well as how students interacted with each other and with the teacher. He tried to be aware of both the process and product of lessons. Basically, he looked for evidence that the written expectations he shared with his staff were being implemented. And, of course, he always looked for smiles.

As he moved into the room, the familiar cries of "Hi, Mr. Sage" greeted him from various corners of the room. He walked over to a girl that was working at her desk. As he did so, she made a mistake on her paper. "What do you do when you make a mistake?" he asked her.

"X it out."

"No, no, let me show you. Watch. Let me show you a little trick."

He helped her for several minutes before a boy walked up to show him a book he was reading. As Mr. Sage looked through the book the boy asked him a question about it. "I don't know, I didn't read the book. Why don't you read it and let me know," Mr. Sage replied. As Mr. Sage walked up to a group that was playing Bingo on the floor another student approached him to tell him about a poem he had written. Mr. Sage told him he would like to see it. The Bingo group asked him to play. "Ok, I'll play until he brings me the poem." The student came back with his poem. Mr. Sage read it while checking his card for Bingo numbers that were simultaneously being called. "Keep going, I'm watching...you don't call any of the numbers I have, let me spin one." He began calling the numbers on his card even though the numbers that came up on the spinner were different. After a few numbers he called, "Bingo" and then turned to the students to ask, "Was that fair? No, it wasn't. I didn't spin those numbers." He laughed and headed for the door. On the way he stopped by a group of girls who showed him some islands they had made out of plaster. "How did you make them? What are

they, Apopka? Ocoee? When did you make them?". After the girls replied he admired their islands for a few seconds and then left the room. He continued his walk-through interacting briefly with students and teacher in each room.

To a substitute teacher: "How's it going? Thanks for coming out."

"Oh, you guys are doing great!"

"Is this our quilt class? This class may have a quilt hanging in the office soon."

Teacher to class: "Is this a new song or a review?"
Mr. Sage: "Review."
Teacher: "How do you know?"
Mr. Sage: "I remember--from the barnyard lesson."

"I like that!"

Mr. Sage reading a poster: "We shall overcome"....
To students: "And what do you want to overcome?"

To a student eating lunch in the courtyard: "Jim, why don't you get one of your buddies to help you pick up all this paper out here."

Student: "Mr. Sage, I want to go to the office to see you."
Mr. Sage: "You practice a book and then come read to me in
the office."

Mr. Sage: "Boy, this is called quiet work right, Mrs. Thompson?"
Mrs. Thompson: "It sure is."
Mr. Sage: "That's nice."

"Are you ready for Friday?"

To a student in the hallway tying his shoe: "Johnny, did you hear your name on the PA this morning? You're doing
pretty good."
Johnny [sheepishly]: "Yeah."
Mr. Sage (by the classroom door): "Are you going in?"
Johnny: "No, I have to stay out here."

Mr.Sage: "So, there's more to your being out here than tying your shoe?!"

Teacher: "We're going to have a movie."
Mr. Sage: "What's the movie on today?" (Teacher is having trouble getting kids settled for the movie.)
Mr. Sage: "You know, Mrs. Ralph, if you closed your eyes and counted to twenty I bet they'd all be ready to go. I bet they'd make it by twelve. "

To two girls dusting as he helps them get some high spots:
"If you don't see it does that make it clean?"

Mr. Sage noticed a single "ding" of a bell that had just rung. One ding was a signal that he was needed in the office, while two dings indicated a need for the assistant principal. The system saved interrupting classrooms with frequent calls over the PA. He left the room and headed to the office.

Mrs. Watson settled her class after the lunch break. It had been a good morning. The language class had gone well. All that was left for today was math, science and her meeting with Mr. Sage. As she readied the equipment for the science experiment they were doing today she thought of how much easier it was to be an effective teacher when you had the materials you needed. She would have been unable to teach the language class the way she did this morning without all the trade books she had in her classroom. The same held for the science lesson she was getting ready to begin. She remembered the day right before Christmas when Mr. Sage had called them all to the media center for a special meeting. At the meeting each teacher was given a pile of boxes containing scales and lathes and all kinds of "neat math and science things" as Mr. Sage had called them. When they asked Mr. Sage where the money had come from to buy all these things he said he had suddenly discovered that he had a lot of money left over in one of the accounts and so decided to spend it. The funny part of the story (in retrospect) was that several weeks later he discovered that the money had been advanced to the account by the district office and was intended to be used to purchase ditto paper for the next several months. While Mr. Sage claimed that it was an unknowing mistake, she wondered whether that was totally true, what with his emphasis on hands-on learning and

deemphasis of the worksheet approach. The incident had initially been very upsetting to some of the teachers but, somehow, Mr. Sage had been able to find a way to acquire ditto paper (that was supposed to arrive soon) for the remainder of the year.

Forty-five minutes later Mrs. Watson headed for Mr. Sage's office. Mr. Sage was sitting on the floor of his office with a second-grader. The child was intently reading a book to Mr. Sage who was listening just as intently. Mrs. Watson looked around the office while she waited for the child to finish reading. On a shelf was a brightly colored wooden train. The cars had the words "I know I can" painted on them. On top of a bookcase was a Bell jar filled with nails of different sizes and types and, fastened to a nearby bulletin board was one huge, shiny nail. On the top shelves of the bookcase were various professional books and manuals. The bottom shelf was filled with children's books. On the endtable stood a mirror with the words, "Make that change" written across the top. The words were in reference to the motivational campaign Mr. Sage initiated the last nine weeks of every school year. Last year the campaign had been based on Michael Jackson's popular song, The Man in the Mirror. The idea had been that change begins within the person who desires to make a change. The mirrors were used to remind everyone that when they looked into them the person they saw was the one that needed to initiate the change. Each year the campaign was shared with students, teachers and parents. She had heard through the grapevine that this year's campaign was to be based on Gloria Estafan's song, Get on Your Feet (and Make it Happen).

After the child finished reading Mr. Sage talked with him about the book for a few minutes before sending him back to the classroom. Mr. Sage escorted her next door to the conference room where they sat down to discuss the grant, which was requesting money to help the school implement a more hands-on approach to science. Today's meeting involved establishing the budget for the grant. They decided to allocate money for equipment, sourcebooks of science activities, computers and software.

"How about purchasing some of these black line ditto books?" she asked him.

"No, I don't like them. That's what this grant is all about--getting things that help teachers use alternative ways of presenting things."

"I agree. Some of the teachers have mentioned some science books that they'd like us to purchase for the

library in order to help students research science information. "

"That sounds great! I've been thinking... We're entitled to an additional special area teacher for the last quin. I don't need another art, music or P.E. teacher. Those are going well. What if we were to make Jim a special area teacher for science? He could job share with Judy in the regular classroom for half a day. He could then spend the other half day doing all the things he wants to do in science with all the kids in the school and she could do some special things with groups in language that she never has time to do."

They had discussed some concerns about whether this would step on anyone else's toes or be disruptive to regular classroom programs. They concluded that it was promising but should be investigated further before proceeding.

After the meeting she picked up her students and brought them back to the classroom. As they were getting ready for dismissal, the afternoon announcements came over the PA. "The correct time is 1:57 PM. Check your book bags, jackets, lunch boxes, desks and pockets to see if you have a T-shirt order. Today is the last day for orders. If you don't order today, you won't get one, so check book bags, jackets, lunch boxes, desks and pockets for T-shirt orders. Remember to bring home coats, jackets and lunch boxes. If you don't bring them home you won't have them tomorrow when you go to get them for school. It's supposed to be cold tomorrow morning and your mother will tell you to put on your jacket but if you've left it at school you won't be able to do that. So take all coats, jackets and lunch boxes home. Boys and girls, as you leave school this afternoon and after you get home, continue to make good choices. Thank you."

At exactly 2 PM she walked her students to the bus loading area. As they waited by the loading area for another class to pass by, Mr. Sage walked over and greeted them. She overheard him asking Melanie what the answer to 7 times 8 was.

Later as she stopped by the office to check her mailbox she saw Mr. Sage speaking with a student who apparently was moving that weekend and would be starting in a new school on Monday. "We're sorry to see you going" she heard him say. "Do you know where your bus pick-up is for your new school?" She continued on her way. It had been a full day.

Discussion

Symbolic leadership takes place through the interactions and routines that make-up daily life. The interpretation of messages sent by interactions and routines, however, is an attempt to "objectify" the subjective, since the message received is dependent not only on the substance of the message, but also on the psychological makeup of the receiver and, the interaction of sender, receiver and message (see discussion in Data Collection section).

The difficulty, thus, in any analysis of symbolic leadership is that the researcher approaches the message second hand, with a different psychological make-up than the original receiver and, interacts only with the message. This difficulty has been somewhat circumvented in the findings section by relying on receiver (staff member) accounts of how they received and interpreted messages in a global sense. However, beyond providing the type of ethnographic description provided in the findings section, further analysis becomes difficult.

In attempting to delineate specific values and themes, a belief that any or, many others would interpret the events in a similar manner is based on the assumption that there is some inherent meaning in an action or artifact. Ethnographers recognize this obstacle to validity and bring self-reflective processes to the data. Noblit (1989, cited in Anderson, 1990a) has noted that readers of ethnography also bring reflective processes to the text and "create their own text from the ethnography, and this text represents a new signification" (p.255).

Guba and Lincoln (1985) make the point that interpretation of data is never objective but simply one perspective of "multiple realities" (p. 72). Thus, the discussion of the school's culture and of the symbolic leadership forms that follows is the researchers "constructed reality" of the "multiple realities" that may exist within the school and the ethnographic description. The discussion contains selected illustrative examples. The reader will discover additional examples as they construct their own realities from the ethnographic description. The original data set included still other examples that space limitations prevented including.

Empowerment through Understanding and Autonomy

Bates (1987) argues that the overriding values of respect, social justice and equity should inform the work of schools. He further asserts that education is fundamentally connected to human emancipation and that emancipation involves understanding and autonomy. When the researchers began gathering data at Carver, they expected to find a principal who strongly pushed a whole language/process writing approach. They had heard that this approach was used extensively at the school and that the principal was in favor of it. What they found, however, was quite different. They found a school whose dominant values were choice (autonomy), growth (understanding) and caring (respect). These three values were very much intertwined. Caring dictated that individuals be permitted to make their own choices. Caring about self and others dictated making right choices. Growth was essential to knowing what choice options existed in order that appropriate informed choices could be made.

While many of the teachers indicated that reading was important in the school and were very aware of Mr. Sage's instructional biases in this area, not one teacher cited any overt pressure to conform to these biases. Indeed, many teachers noted that Mr. Sage encouraged them to teach in the way that they felt was most appropriate. Autonomy, however, did not come without responsibility. Mr. Sage demanded that teachers critically exam what they were doing, understand why they were doing it and, be able to justify their methods to others. In one instance he refused a group of teachers permission to use an instructional strategy that he was personally in favor of, but which the teachers could not justify. In another instance he told a group of teachers, "You need to do your own thinking. Each of you needs to be able to justify and explain what you're doing. You don't all need to be doing the same thing."

Mr. Sage helped teachers assume their responsibility to critically exam their methods by providing opportunities for them to become aware of choice options that existed. He frequently placed copies of articles he had read in their mailboxes with comments such as, "Thought you might be interested in this." One teacher mentioned that these articles were not always consistent with Mr. Sage's instructional biases, occasionally presenting an alternative viewpoint. Mr. Sage insured that there were numerous school-based staff development

opportunities. Additionally, when district opportunities were available, he made arrangements to cover the classrooms of teachers who wanted to attend.

Mr. Sage modeled growth by being cognizant of the latest thinking in curriculum and instructional methodology. He promoted growth in students by turning virtually every interaction into a learning situation. He didn't simply cook a turkey for them, he transformed cooking into a science lesson. He didn't simply visit classrooms, he used visits as opportunities to extend students thinking about what they were learning. He didn't simply make announcements, he used them as an opportunity to sensitize students to choices and responsibilities they had.

Although teachers were given autonomy to choose instructional methodology, Mr. Sage also had a responsibility to personally critically examine and select from among choice options. Once this responsibility is exercised, the distinction between manipulating organizational members to adopt leader-made choices and protecting their autonomy to make their own choices becomes fine indeed. While the influence of Mr. Sage's choices were evident in the school, he was careful not to let the choices he had made restrict those of others. On the other hand, he was not hesitant to proceed through the day in a manner consistent with his choices. An examination of Mr. Sage's actions sheds light on how leaders can be true to their own values without removing other's freedom to choose.

Whole language emphasis

One of Mr. Sage's choices was for the efficacy of a whole language approach that encompassed literature-based reading and process writing. Many of his actions indicated this preference. It was not an uncommon sight to see Mr. Sage in the office with a student reading a book to him. Periodically, he would visit a classroom to read a book to the students. During one period of time he read a book or story over the PA every week and any classroom that wanted to tune in could do so. The previous year teachers had been given baskets of children's books for a Valentine's present. This year they had been given a box of file folders which was an esssential organizing tool in the whole language program. In the school office, baskets of children's books were found on the endtables. A bookshelf in Mr. Sage's office was devoted solely to children's books. One of the teachers mentioned that a question she had been asked

during her selection interview was, "What was the last children's book that you read?" When a nationally known whole language expert was brought in by the school district, Mr. Sage offered to provide a substitute teacher for any teacher interested in attending the expert's workshop, which was being held on a school day. Articles placed in teacher's mailboxes frequently dealt with whole language. Children's books were used to set the theme for each year. One year Mr. Sage worked with a group of fifth graders on a weekly basis doing process writing.

In spite of all the messages teachers were sent regarding the whole language approach, they still retained autonomy in selecting the approach they would use in language instruction. Mr. Sage indicated to the researchers that he never overtly told teachers that this was his personal preference unless they directly asked him. A meeting with a group of teachers supported this. When asked by the teachers what percentage of time he felt should be spent on phonics instruction, Mr. Sage responded but immediately followed his response by telling them that they needed to do their own thinking and be able to justify what they were doing. One teacher noted, "You kind of have to be a dummy to not know that whole language is important around here. However, we...can make our own decisions that 'Yes, we need this much of whole language, but we also need to do this'".

Hands-on, process emphasis

Mr. Sage encouraged teachers to critically examine not only what students learned but also how they learned. The instructional delivery method that Mr. Sage personally preferred was active, hands-on learning. He confessed to one of the researchers that sometimes when the copy machine got low on supplies, he placed an "out of order" sign on it even though some supplies remained. His hope was that being temporarily unable to copy worksheets for students would force teachers to explore alternative ways of delivering the same content. In a meeting dealing with resource allocation he opted for trade books in lieu of black line masters. When surplus funds seemed to exist, he purchased math and science equipment only to find out later that the money had actually been placed into the school's account for ditto paper. The choice of math and science materials he provided for teachers (manipulatives, balances, scales, equipment for experiments) indicated that the way

students acquired knowledge in these subjects was important.

There were other examples of the importance of process as well as product. One teacher told a story about a time when Mr. Sage had visited her classroom while they were eating cake and discussing appropriate table manners. Suddenly, Mr. Sage had chimed in, "We ought to be baking a cake, not just eating it." In another classroom he sat down with the children and showed them how to carve apples into dinosaurs and later made dinosaur T-shirts with them as part of a unit on dinosaurs. The previous year he had required each class to develop a "polished product" for the year with which they could "shine". In many classes this involved an ongoing process of development and refinement with some classes not completing their project until the last week of school. A component of whole language program that was prevalent in the school is a process approach to writing. The focus is as much on the process students use to produce a finished piece of writing as on the product itself.

The emphasis on process is consistent with the value of growth through understanding. Getting the right answer was perhaps less important than developing increased understanding of why the final product was attained or, why the desired result did not match the achieved result. Understanding "why" informs future choice. One teacher noted, "I don't think I've really heard yet...what's more important, product or process...I think what you'll hear on this campus is that it's real important to get kids to understand how to develop it, not to worry about if they get it right all the time."

Emerging math and science emphasis

During an interview with Mr. Sage he noted that his goal had been to make Carver the best reading and writing school he had ever been at during his first five years. Now, four years later, he felt that they this goal had been accomplished so he was now "baiting people with math and science". He also indicated in the interview that when he decided what to fund from teacher wish lists, math and science items would receive priority.

There were several examples that indicated the emerging importance of math and science. Halfway through the academic year there appeared to be a surplus of funds in the instructional materials and supplies fund. Mr. Sage used the money to purchase balances, scales, other

science equipment as well as math manipulatives which he then excitedly presented to the teachers as a gift.

He had succeeded in getting his curriculum resource teacher trained as a workshop presentor for AIMS, a program that involved incorporating hands-on activities in math and science. She, in turn, had provided staff development for the remainder of the staff. Mr. Sage noted in his interview, "By having Ginny involved in that, I got the latest research in Math and Science".

He was also working on a means of freeing a teacher who was proficient at using an activity approach in science from part of his classroom teaching duties in order that the teacher could work with groups of students from other classrooms on science as well as serve as a science resource person. This same teacher regularly did a Mr. Wizard type science show for his classroom which was now being videotaped and made available for other classrooms in the school to view. Mr. Sage had also gotten several teachers involved in writing a science grant.

Henry Giroux (1987) in discussing critical curriculum theory writes that the language of critique and the language of possibility are essential to such a theory. In a sense, the manner in which Steve Sage influenced the culture of Carver Elementary School is characterized by critique and opportunity. He encouraged teachers to constantly critique what they were doing in the classroom. Concurrently he provided multiple opportunities for them to improve their ability to critique as well as alternative models of instructional delivery to consider. The opportunities were always choices rather than mandates. Consequently, he simultaneously empowered teachers, avoided manipulation and, remained true to his values.

Forms of Symbolic Leadership

When the researchers examined the symbolic leadership forms used by Mr. Sage, several forms were discovered that had not been included in the original taxonomy. These are underlined on Table 1.

While Mr.Sage used many of the symbolic forms included in Table 1, the primary ways he made his values apparent was through, a.) the way he spent his time, b.) the way he acquired and allocated resources, c.) the language he used and, d.) the external symbols he used.

Use of time

Underlying the concept of time is the notion of respect and caring. If we respect and care for ourselves, we will use our time on those things we feel are most important to us. If we respect and care for others we will not waste their time.

Mr. Sage used his time to indicate what was important to him. He spent it continually interacting with teachers and students in ways that showed them he cared and that directly or indirectly contributed to their growth. He provided opportunities for teachers professional growth in order that they could maximize their capabilities and not waste the time of their students. He frequently made teachers conscious of the value of time by urging them to adhere to established schedules lest they waste the time of others. A line from one of his bulletins to teachers perhaps most accurately reflected the importance of time to Mr.Sage. "We need to make sure we are using the time correctly...everything revolves around time even when we do not have enough of it."

Resource expenditure

The way resources were acquired and expended by Mr. Sage was one of the most interesting aspects of this study. The unwritten and unstated assumption was that resources would not be an obstacle that restricted choice options. During the interviews teachers continually noted that materials and equipment needed was somehow always provided. Through wish lists and grant writing Mr. Sage encouraged people to dream about what could be if only they had the resources and then figured out how to provide them with the resources needed. Resources thus served to expand the choice options available to teachers by encouraging them to think about possibility. In essence, resources empowered teachers to fulfill choices that in other places existed only in an ideal world.

While resources were acquired primarily from traditional sources, the uniques aspect of resource acquistion at Carver was the variety of places from which resources came and the degree in which each of these ways were used. The school received merit school money from the state, it had an extended day program which netted a profit, staff members were prolific in writing grants, partnerships had been established with several businesses and, donations were solicited from numerous other merchants.

Use of language and symbols

Mr. Sage was a master of using language. He had an innate knack for quickly sizing up a situation and saying the appropriate words. His words were frequently intended to give positive reinforcement (e.g. "Oh, Mrs. Martin will like that"), promote good behavior in a positive way (e.g. "You know, Mrs. Ralph, I bet if you closed your eyes and counted to twenty they'd be ready to go") or, stimulate students to think critically (e.g. "Oh, I know the answer now! But I'll write it on a piece of paper." or, "Who's thinking like Amelia Bedelia?").

Slogans, logos, songs, books, nails, mirrors, and other external symbols were used as a special means of building pride, self-concept and motivation--stepping stones on the road to growth. They further served to embed certain language in the school that could later be used to further reinforce values or themes. For example, the school slogan, "Carver: Where the Kids Shine", and the accompanying logo of the school stallion rearing proudly with the rays of the sun shining in the background, were intended to develop pride and self-concept. Throughout the year they served as the basis for references to individuals "shining". The yearly book theme (Nail Soup) and the final quin theme (Make that Change) served to provide special motivation. The language of shining was combined with references to the nail campaign with statements such as, "What are you doing to polish your nail?"

Summary

This manuscript has provided some examples of symbolic leadership and engaged in a limited analysis of it. The researchers, however, conclude this manuscript draft with the feeling that this project is incomplete. There are many events and stories in the data that remain untold in this paper. The richness of the data and the interrelationships between many of the themes made telling this story difficult. We hope that the current draft has begun to capture a bit of the richness aand complexity of symbolic leadership. We would appreciate any critiques readers may wish to share with us.

The way Steve Sage used symbols, language, resources and time capture the essence of his symbolic leadership. We hope that his story and that of Carver Elementary School will help in a small way to inform the practice of leadership.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

1. Demographic information:
   Grade level _____
   Years at Carver _____
   Total educational experience _____

2. How do you feel about working at this school?

3. What is it that makes you feel this way about working here?

4. What makes this school different than other schools in which you have worked?

5. What is important in this school?

6. What do you think your principal thinks is important (generally/instructionally) ?

7. How do you know these things are important to him?

8. Can you think of a situation where he demonstrated what was important to him?

9. Can you think of any other incidents, stories or examples where he demonstrated what was important to him?

10. What is important instructionally in this school?

11. Is your principal involved with the instructional program in this school? If so, how (cite examples)?

12. Do you think that teachers (staff, students) work hard in this school? If so, what motivates them to work hard?

13. How are resources allocated in this school?

14. How is the school viewed by the surrounding community?

15. What does the school do to involve the community in the school?

16. Is there anything else about your school that we haven't discussed that you think I should know?

. Table . 1

Taxonomy of Symbolic Leadership Forms

TECHNICAL	HUMAN	EDUCATIONAL	SYMBOLIC/CULTURAL	
			Actions	Language
planning	consideration	diagnosing educational problems	way time is spent	conversations
coordinating	support	counseling teachers on instructional matters	where energy is committed	questions asked
scheduling	concern	supervision of instruction	meetings attended	topics discussed
budgeting	individuality	evaluation	where meetings are located	announcements
accounting	autonomy	staff development	which items result in follow-up	feedback given
initiating structure	encouragement	curriculum development	presiding over ceremonies, rituals, etc.	gestures
forms management	reinforcement	discussing instructional program	things rewarded	nonverbal communication
	growth opportunities*	providing growth opportunities**	downplaying one type of concern (e.g. management) in favor of another (e.g. educational)	stories
	building morale		modeling	jokes
	participatory decision-making		touring school	myths
	conflict management		visiting classrooms	legends
	discipline		spending time with students, teachers	favorite sayings
	team building		rituals	oft repeated phrases
	counseling		rites of passage	rumors
			ceremonies	content of documents***
			way resources are acquired	-agendas
			resources requested	-handbooks
			way resources are expended	-policy books
			decisions made	-memos
			materials distributed	-newsletters
			presents given	-letters
			procedures/policies developed	-slogans
				-school philosophies
			Artifacts	-mission statements
				-written correspondence
			Documents****	-other documents
			-agendas	-teacher bulletins
			-handbooks	-grant proposals
			-policy books	songs sung
			-memos	books read
			-newsletters	
			-letters	
			-slogans	
			-school philosophies	
			-mission statements	
			-written correspondence	
			-other documents	
			-teacher bulletins	
			-grant proposals	
			school products	
			badges, pins, buttons	

Key:
* cross reference: educational
** cross reference: human
*** cross reference: artifacts
**** cross reference: language
___ items generated by this study